Four Protective Meditations



Nā-Uyana Monastery

Four Protective Meditations
A translation of 'Caturarakkha Bhavana'
By Nā-Uyana Monastery
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A word from the editor

A Lord Buddha, a Fully Enlightened One, is born with the intention of eradicating the suffering endured by all beings from birth to death. By following the teachings of the Buddha, living beings transcend suffering. The teaching of Buddha is the path to liberation: morality (**sīla**), concentration (**samādhi**) and wisdom (**paññā**).

Anyone who follows this sequential and methodical practice should seek his own protection. The protections are: the recollection of the virtues of the Buddha, loving-kindness meditation, meditation on the repulsiveness of the body and the recollection of death.

All those who wish to attain Nibbāna may use this book as guidance. It has been written in a simple manner that is easy to grasp, neither too wordy nor too concise.

May the minds of those who are using this book be filled with happiness and peace.

May the merits produced by the noble deed of publishing this book be homage to our teachers, preceptors, parents and those who have helped my pabbajja life. May it be a blessing to the noble and virtuous disciples of the Budthe Buddha; may they attain Nibbāna very soon.

May the merits gained by lawyer Mr. H.M.H. Bandara and the others at Dimuthu Printers (which prints this book), Mr Tharindu Bandara and Punya Munasinghe who translated this valuable book to English, and bore the printing charges, Venerables Ireland Sumedha and Canada Jinaratana who added more value by editing this book, and everyone else who helped in this act of dāna, assist them in attaining Nibbāna.

May the merits be shared with the devotees, who undertook the expenses in printing this book, their present relatives and those who have passed away. May they all attain the bliss of Nibbāna swiftly and easily!!!Venerable S. Ñānasiri Nā-Uyana Monastery

August 2016

Preface

Selo yathā ekaghano - vātena na samīrati
Evaṃ nindāpasaṃsāsu - na samiñjanti paṇḍitā

"Just as a solid rock is unshaken by the wind,
So the wise are undisturbed by either praise or blame"

The meaning of the above is that a well-trained mind is moderate, patient, has foresight and is unshakeable. One whose mind is disturbed and frequently agitated has to follow a set of practices in order to make the mind calm and quiet. Four prominent practices with such an aim are meditation on: the virtues of the Buddha, loving-kindness, repulsiveness of the body and death. These four meditations are also called the four protective meditations (**caturārakkha bhāvanā**).

Just as, for those who are residing in a house, the four walls provide protection from wind, rain and dew, so the four protective meditations protect the mind in four different ways.

The meditation on the virtues of the Buddha develops faith, confidence, and happiness which induce eagerness in practicing meditation.

By practicing loving-kindness meditation, the restlessness or the negativity of mind declines. By strengthening the results of good kamma and thereby weakening the results of bad kamma, it facilitates ease of progress along the path.

The practice of repulsiveness meditation helps to develop a peaceful mind by diminishing craving, thereby making a better environment for meditation practice.

By practicing meditation on death a sense of urgency develops, eradicating procrastination, which therefore makes a suitable ground for progress in meditation.

Since it's essential to practice the four protective meditations, we request you to practice them well by following the instructions in this Dhamma booklet.

May the thero, Venerable Sīlagama Ñāṇasiri who produced this Dhamma booklet gain more strength to help the many by introducing accurate meditation practices to the world. May the bliss of the Dhamma be with the head instructor of Sri Kalyaṇi Yogashrama Saṃstha, Most Venerable Na Uyane Ariyadhamma Mahathero, and the mighty gem of the Sangha!

May the merits gained by the pious devotees who undertook the expenses in printing this book, the lawyer lawyer Mr. H.M.H. Bandara and the rest at Dimuthu Printers (which prints this book), Venerables Ireland Sumedha and Canada Jinaratana, who further edited this book, and everyone else who helped in this deed, pave the way to Nibbāna.

May all beings be blessed by the Dhamma!

With Mettā, **Angulgamuwe Ariyananda Mahāthero**

Nā Uyana Monastery

Contents

Introduction

There are two types of meditation: tranquility meditation (**samatha**) and insight meditation (**vipassana**). Through tranquility meditation, the tranquility of mind is developed by suppressing the five hindrances (**nīvaraṇa**). Through insight meditation insight into the five aggregates (**pañcakkhandha**) is developed. Every meditator who practices either tranquility meditation or insight meditation should master these four subjects for meditation, namely: recollection of the virtues of the (**Buddhānussati**),loving-kindness (**mettābhāvanā**), repulsiveness of the body (**asubhabhāvanā**) and recollection of death (**maraṇānussati**).

These four subjects of meditation are also known as **'sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhānaṃ'** or **'catura¯rakkha kammaṭṭhānaṃ'** . The meaning of **sabbhatthaka** is that all meditators should practice them frequently and regularly, whereas **catura¯rakkha** means that they act as warriors that protect the mind from four defilements: lack of faith, aversion, hedonism and procrastination.

By practicing **Buddhānussati** one nurtures faith in the Buddha, thereby dispelling the defilement of doubt that arises due to lack of faith.

Practicing **mettābhāvanā** - developing loving-kindness towards all beings - helps to make the mind calm by eliminating aversion. By nurturing loving-kindness one becomes tends to be loved by other beings and is thereby freed from danger.
Practicing **asubhabhāvanā** helps one to realize the repulsiveness of the body; it thus tends to dispel unwholesome attachments.

Practicing **maraṇānussati** – reflecting on the impermanence of life helps to develop urgency in meditation practice and encourages one to do wholesome deeds.

Due to such benefits, practicing these meditation subjects is appropriate as preliminary work, before starting meditation according to a **kammaṭṭhāna** (meditation object) that is specially

suited to the character of the individual meditator. It is also important to practice the **caturārakkha kammaṭṭhānaṃ** thoroughly in order to attain absorptions (**jhāna**)), higher knowledges (**abhiñña**) and the four noble fruits.

In order to start meditation the meditator should retire to a suitable place, one which is relaxing. Then he should sit comfortably, keeping the body erect. With a peaceful mind, he should do some preliminary chanting (to be described as follows) and then spend some time recollecting the four subjects of mediation described above. Afterwards he should start practicing a **kammaṭṭhāna** that he is accustomed to. In order to obtain a **kammaṭṭhāna** one should seek a teacher well-experienced in meditation.

Preliminary work

As a preliminary to formal meditation it is helpful to do some chanting. The meditator should take a seat, and then select one method from the three presented below and chant the verses printed in ***bold-italic*** script. Some verses are given in English, others in Pāli; guides to pronounciation of the Pāli language are available online.

Method 1.1
Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa
Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa
Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa

(I pay homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One)

Itipi so Bhagavā, Arahaṃ, Sammāsambuddho, Vijjācaraṇa sampanno, Sugato, Lokavidū, Anuttaro purisadammasārathi, Satthā devamanussānaṃ, Buddho, Bhagavā ti

(Such is the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Self-awakened One, endowed with knowledge and conduct, the Well-gone, Knower of the Worlds, unsurpasssed trainer of those to be trained, teacher of Devas and humans, the Awakened One, the Blessed One)

Sādhu! Sādhu!! Sādhu!!!

The Master, the Blessed One - since you were divorced from all defilements,
Destroyed the enemies that are defilements - demolished the spokes of ignorance in the wheel of saṃsāra
Became worthy of all offerings - possessed pure consciousness
Commiting no evil, even in secret, so so are you called Arahaṃ;
To the supremely enlightened one - to the one who possesses such a limitless heap of virtues
I pay my homage.
I entrust you with my life
Let my life be entrusted to you

Sādhu! Sādhu!! Sādhu!!!

Svākkhāto Bhagavatā Dhammo, Sandiṭṭhiko, Akāliko, Ehipassiko, Opanayiko, Paccattaṃ Veditabbo Viññūhī'ti

(The Blessed One's Way is well-expounded, visible right now, timeless, inviting one to see, leading onwards, to be experienced by the wise)

Sādhu! Sādhu!! Sādhu!!!

The Master, the Blessed One -The gem of nine-fold Dhamma
Which you comprehended beneath Sri Maha Bodhi
Is well-expounded at the start, the middle and the end
It proclaims
thethe pure life with utmost perfection - in its letter and meaning
So it is called 'Svākkhāto'
To the Dhamma which possesses such infinite qualities
I pay my homage
I entrust my life
Let my life be entrusted to the Dhamma

Sādhu! Sādhu!! Sādhu!!!

Supaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho,
Ujupaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho,
Ñāyapaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho,
Sāmīcipaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho;
Yadidaṃ cattāri purisayugāni aṭṭha purisapuggalā,
Esa bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho;
Āhuneyyo, Pāhuneyyo, Dakkhiṇeyyo, Añjalikaraṇīyo,
Anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ lokassā'ti

Sādhu! Sādhu!! Sādhu!!!

(The Blessed One's disciples have practiced well, have practiced uprightly, have practiced insightfully, have practiced correctly; that is to say, the four pairs, the eight individuals. They are the

Blessed One's disciples, worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect. An unsurpassed field of merit for the world.)

The Master, the Blessed One
As your noble eight-fold order of disciples set forth on the right path they are called Supaṭipanno To the Saṅgha which possess such an infinite heap of virtues
I pay my homage
I entrust my life
Let my life be entrusted to the Saṅgha

Sādhu! Sādhu!! Sādhu!!!

Piyo ca garubhāvanīyo - vattā ca vacanakkhamo;
Gambhīrañca kathaṃ kattā - no caṭṭhāne niyojako'ti

--AN 7:37 Dutiyamitta Suttaṃ

Those who are loved, respected, and honored by others due to the excellence in morality, those who advise and instruct, who have patience over vicious word, Who teach profound aspects of Dhamma Who pave the way in the noble path without misleading I pay homage to those virtuous friends (Kalyãna mittã)

Sādhu! Sādhu!! Sādhu!!!

The Master, the Blessed One!
For any wrongs I have done you, through body, speech, or mind
May I be pardoned by the gem of the Buddha
May I be pardoned by the gem of Dhamma
May I be pardoned by the gem of Saṅgha
May I be pardoned by all noble ones
May I be pardoned by all virtuous friends

Sādhu! Sādhu!! Sādhu!!!
May I be free from enmity, free from anger, free from mental suffering

May I be free from physical suffering
May I be well and happy
Just as me, so may those dear to me, the neutral ones, my enemies and all beings
Be free from enmity
Be free from anger
Be free from mental suffering
Be free from physical suffering
Be well and happy

This body of mine is not made out of gold, silver, pearls, emeralds or precious gems
It is made out of thirty two parts which are revolting and have a foul odor
Head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, and flesh …
It is repulsive
It is repulsive

Aniccā vata saṅkhārā - uppādavayadhammino;
Uppajjitvā nirujjhanti - tesaṃ vūpasamo sukho'ti

--DN 16, SN 6:15 9:6 15:20

(All formations are impermanent - they have the nature of arising and passing away
Having arisen, they pass away -their cessation, Nibbāna, brings true bliss)

My life is uncertain. Death is certain.
Life is uncertain. Death is certain.
Life is uncertain. Death is certain.
May this [**meditation object**] of mine pave the way
To the bliss of Nibbāna attained by Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas and Arahants
By becoming detached from the aggregates
Which are impermanent
Which are subject to agony
Which are not-self

Which are repulsive

Sādhu! Sādhu!! Sādhu!!!

Method 2

Namāmi buddhaṃ guṇa sāgarantaṃ
Sattā sadā hontu sukhī averā
Kāyo jiguccho sakalo dugandho
Gacchanti sabbe maraṇaṃ ahañ'ca

Namami Dhammaṃ sugatena desitaṃ
Sattā sadā hontu sukhī averā
Kāyo jiguccho sakalo dugandho
Gacchanti sabbe maraṇaṃ ahañ'ca

Namāmi Saṅghaṃ muṇirāja sāvakaṃ
Sattā sadā hontu sukhī averā
Kāyo jiguccho sakalo dugandho
Gacchanti sabbe maraṇaṃ ahañ'ca

(I bow to the Buddha of oceanic virtue – may all beings be forever happy, free from enmity
The body is disgusting – completely reeking
All are going towards death, including myself

I bow to the Dhamma, declared by the Sugata - may all beings be forever happy, free from enmity
The body is disgusting – completely reeking
All are going towards death, including myself

I bow to the Saṅgha, disciples of the King of Sages - may all beings be forever happy, free from enmity
The body is disgusting – completely reeking
All are going towards death, including myself)

Piyo ca garubhāvanīyo - vattā ca vacanakkhamo;
Gambhīrañca kathaṃ kattā - no caṭṭhāne niyojako'ti

--AN 7:37 Dutiyamitta Suttaṃ
Those who are loved, respected, and honored by others due to the excellence in morality, those who advise and instruct, who have patience over vicious word, Who teach profound aspects of Dhamma Who pave the way in the noble path without misleading
I pay homage to those virtuous friends (Kalyãna mittã)

Sādhu! Sādhu!! Sādhu!!!

Method 3

I pay homage to the gem of the Buddha for first, second and third time
So too I entrust my life
Let my life be entrusted

I pay homage to the gem of the Dhamma for first, second and third time
So too I entrust my life
Let my life be entrusted

I pay homage to the gem of the Sangha for first, second and third time
So too I entrust my life
Let my life be entrusted

Meditation on the Virtues of the Buddha (Buddhānussati)

This is a meditation commonly practiced among Buddhists. This is also called 'meditiation on the nine qualities of the Buddha', since it is a recollection of the nine virtues of the Buddha mentioned in the verse "**Iti pi so Bhagava….**"

Visualizing a Buddha statue that makes your mind happy and peaceful, contemplate these virtues of the Buddha one by one.

ArahaṃSince the Buddha has demolished all defilements such as craving, aversion and ignorance he has become worthy of all offerings - material and non-material. Thus He is called '**Arahaṃ**' (the Worthy One).**Sammāsambuddho**Since the Buddha attained enlightenment on his own by realizing the four noble truths: the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of freedom from suffering, and the truth of the way to the ending of suffering, so He is called '**Sammāsambuddho**' (the Perfectly Self-Awakened One). **Vijjācaraṇa Sampanno**Since the Buddha possessed 8 eight varieties of direct knowledge and fifteen virtuous qualities, therefore He is called '**Vijjācaraṇa Sampanno**' (endowed with knowledge and conduct). **Sugato**Since the time of Buddha '**Dīpankara**' he walked on the Middle Path, endowed with perfect speech. In his final existence, He lived a perfect life and reached blissful Nibbāna. Therefore He is called '**Sugato**' (the Well-Gone). **Lokavidu**Since the Buddha had a perfect knowledge of the three different realms of existence (the sensuous world (**kāma loka**), the fine-material world (**rūpa loka**) and the immaterial world (**arūpa loka**)) so He is called '**LokavidLokavidu**' '(Knower of the Worlds).**Anuttaro Purisadamma Sārathī** Since the Buddha tamed: **Aṅgulimāla** and **Nāḷāgiri** the elephant, with immense compassion, **Saccaka** and the **Nigaṇṭhas** with mighty wisdom, and celestial and human beings who had wrong view by performing the twin miracle (**yamaka pāṭihāriya**), so He is called '**Anuttaro Purisadamma Sārathī**' (Unsurpassed Trainer of those to be Trained).**Satthā Devamanussānaṃ**Since the Buddha re-discovered the way to Nibbāna and taught it to both celestial and human beings, so He is called 'Satthā Devamanussānaṃ' (Teacher of Devas and Humans).

BuddhoSince the Buddha became omniscient, having discovered the Four Noble Truths, and also having made others realize the same, so He is called 'Buddho'(the Awakened One).**Bhagavā**Since the Buddha was blessed by the power of the piety of His previous births, and as He had demolished all kinds of defilements so He is called '**Bhagavā** ' (the Blessed One).

The virtues of the Buddha can be elaborated further. This is given in brief so that one may remember easily, but This is given is for you also to recollect different variations of the Buddha's virtues.

Keeping the above descriptions in mind, recollect the "**itipi so**" verse from start to end (from '**Arahaṃ**' to '**Bhagavā**'). Mentally recite the virtues, keeping at least one meaning for each virtue in mind. This recollection should neither be too fast nor too slow. If the recollection is too fast, you might forget or mix-up the meanings. If it is too slow, it may delay the settling of the mind, or even cause agitation. Hence, one should recite to oneself the normal way it is done in Buddhist countries, at a moderate speed. After reciting it in ascending order, recite it in descending order ("**Bhagavā, Buddho.... Arahaṃ**". If it is difficult to do in descending order, it is fine to restrict oneself to ascending order. Don't forget that you must recall at least one meaning of each virtue.

Keep on doing this not just ten, twelve, but twenty or thirty times. Time-permitting you can even continue a few hundred times. You will notice that your mind is gradually getting settled. Perhaps you will even see images of the Buddha in front of you. You should not pay attention to them; instead, keep on recollecting the virtues of Buddha. As you progress, your mind will become calm and you will see a light. This light may be similar to the light of the sun at dawn. Do not crave such experiences, b but keep on recollecting the virtues of the Buddha.

You should never start meditation with a desire to see such light. This is a common instruction to any meditation object. One who begins meditation with too much expectation will not be able to to progress. All he should have is the mere awareness of his meditation object.

After sufficient practice, select one virtue out of the nine and focus the mind solely on that virtue. As a result, you will be able to experience the mind become extremely calm.the mind become extremely calm.

Loving-Kindness Meditation (Mettābhāvanā)

After doing the preliminary practices (see above, **methods 1**, **2** and **3**), spread loving-kindness to yourself for a little while and then visualize a teacher who is very compassionate, to whom you have respect and who is also of the same sex. Spread loving-kindness to that teacher. One can develop this meditation object successively from first **jhāna** to second **jhāna** and up to third **jhāna**. This should be done in four different ways by using these phrases (one phrase at a time): be free from enmity (**averā hotu**), be free from mental suffering (**abyāpajjhā hotu**), be free from physical suffering (**anighā hotu**), be well and happy (**sukhī attānaṃ pariharatu**).

Next, follow the same procedure, only this time selecting ten people select ten people from each of these four categories: those whom you respect, those whom are dear to you, those you feel neutrally towards and those to whom you feel hostility.

In total, then, one will reach third **jhāna** spreading loving-kindness to forty people. When one is able to attain third **jhāna** by spreading loving-kindness equally to one esself, dear ones, neutral ones and enemies, **sīma sambheda** (the breaking down of barriers distance between individuals) occurs.

At this point loving-kindness can be spread in the ten directions to twelve different categories of beings: **sabbe sattā**, **sabbe pāṇā**, **sabbe bhūtā**, **sabbe puggalā**, **sabbe attabhāvapariyāpannā**, **sabbā itthiyo**, **sabbe purisā**, **sabbe ariyā**, **sabbe anariyā**, **sabbe devā**, **sabbe manussā**, **sabbe vinipātikā**.
1 **Sabbe sattā**-All beings, so-called sentient beings endowed with five aggregates2**Sabbe pāṇā** -All breathing beings 3**Sabbe bhūtā** -All beings that arise owing to their kamma4**Sabbe puggalā** -All

individuals, beings seen as individuals5**Sabbe attabhāva-pariyāpannā**-All personalities, beings with 'personality view'6**Sabbā itthiyo**-All females7**Sabbe purisā**-All males8**Sabbe ariyā**-All noble ones who have attained the four stages of liberation - **Sotāpanna**, **Sakadāgāmi**, **Anāgāmi**, and **Arahat**9**Sabbe anariyā** -All those who are not noble ones10**Sabbe devā** -All celestial beings of the deva and brahma worlds11**Sabbe manussā** -All humankind12**Sabbe vinipātikā** -All beings born in the woeful states due to bad kamma, such as animals, petas, asuras, and hell beings

A total of 528 kinds of **jhāna** can be attained through loving-kindness meditation. Without regard to direction (boundless), there are twelve different categories of beings and four ways (12x4 = 48). Further, the twelve different categories of beings, regarded in four ways are considered according to the ten directions in which they dwell (12x4x10 = 480). The total is 528 (48+480) **jhānas**.

According to the Buddha loving-kindness meditation brings these benefits.

The meditator:

1. **Sleeps well**
2. **Wakes well**
3. **Has no bad dreams**
4. **Is loved by human beings**
5. **Is loved by non-human beings**
6. **Is protected by devas**
7. **Will suffer no harm from fire, weapons, or poison**
8. **Will have an easily concentrated mind**
9. **Will have a clear complexion**
10. **Will die mindfully**
11. **Will, should he not attain Arahat, be reborn in a Brahma world**

May all develop enthusiasm to practice loving-kindness meditation, which brings such immeasurable blessings.

Meditation on the Repulsiveness of a Corpse (Asubhabhāvanā)

The first **jhāna** based on repulsiveness can be attained by directing the light of concentration (**samādhi**) at a corpse one has seen before, and contemplating its repulsive nature.

By contemplating ~~on~~ the repulsiveness of the various stages of decomposition of a corpse, the first **jhāna** can be attained in ten ways. The stages of decomposition are: **uddhumātaka** (a bloated corpse), **vinīlaka** (a black and blue discolored corpse), **vipubbaka** (a festering corpse), **vicchiddaka** (a corpse cut in the middle), **vikkhāyitaka** (a gnawed corpse), **vikkhittaka** (a scattered corpse), **hatavikkhittaka** (a hacked and scattered corpse), **lohitaka** (a bleeding corpse), **puḷavaka** (a worm-infested corpse) and **aṭṭhika** (a skeleton). These ten **jhānas** are similar in their characteristics.

The filthiness and the stench of a corpse reveal its loathsome, disgusting nature. When head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, stool, and urine are detached from the body, one becomes hesitant to touch them, feeling disgusted and embarrassed to see them. Those things that are inside the body are just as disgusting as whatever has become detached from the body. This fact needs to be kept in mind.

Guided Meditation:

Imagine that your dead body is lying on the ground without any preservatives applied. It becomes dark in color and and bloated. It becomes increasingly disgusting to look at and swells more and more until it bursts. After several days, it starts to secrete fluid from the eyes, mouth and anus. You can see worms creeping out. As the body rots you see the flesh decay and start to ooze as well. This emits a terrible odor, extremely loathsome. As the flesh decays more and more, one starts seeing bones here and there. Gradually only a skeleton remains.

It is certain that my body will someday undergo this revolting process. If it were left lying on the ground it would certainly go

through this transformation. This is the nature of all formations.
Final Stage: Can you picture a skeleton in your mind? Contemplate it until it establishes itself and reaches a state where you can picture it easily and quickly. You will soon get the opportunity to make use of it.

Recollection of Death (Maranãnussati)

In accordance with the **Mahasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta** and the **Visuddhimagga** commentary, the recollection of death can be developed based on a corpse that you have seen before. It is possible to visualize one's own dead body. Therefore, in order to do **maraṇa¯nussati**, you should attain the first **jhāna** by recollecting the repulsiveness of an external corpse. When you attain the first **jhāna**, you should reflect that "similarly, this body of mine is subject to death. Indeed it will die just like this. It's not possible to escape from it." By keeping the mind concentrated, being mindful of your own death, you will develop a sense of anxiety and urgency (**saṃvega**). When this feeling arises, you will probably see your own body as a repulsive corpse. By perceiving that the life-faculty has been cut off in the image of your own corpse, you should continue to meditate on the object of 'cutting-off of the life-faculty'. When the mind is becoming concentrated you should repeat one of the following four phrases mentally:

1. *I am certain to die, life is impermanent* (**maraṇaṃ me dhuvaṃ; ji¯vitaṃ me adhuvaṃ**)
2. *I will certainly die* (**maraṇaṃ me bhavissati**)
3. *My life will end in death* (**maraṇa pariyosānaṃ me ji¯vitaṃ**)
4. *Death, Death* (**maraṇaṃ, maraṇaṃ**)

Select whichever amongst these ~~that~~ you like as a way to concentrate; you can note it in any language. You should keep practicing until you become skillful enough to concentrate calmly on the object of 'the cutting off of the life-faculty' in the image of your own dead body for one or two hours. When you are capable

of doing this, the five **jhāna** factors will arise. But with this subject of meditation, however, you can it is only possible to attain the access concentration.

Putting it all Together

These four subjects of meditation: **loving-kindness, recollection of the virtues of the Buddha, repulsiveness of a corpse** and **recollection of death**, are called the '**Four Protections**' or the '**Four Protective Meditations**' as they are capable of protecting the meditator from various dangers. It is therefore important to learn and develop these before proceeding to develop insight meditation.

In the **Meghiya Sutta** (AN 9:3) it states that:

> For the removal of craving, meditation on repulsiveness should be developed, for the removal of aversion, loving-kindness should be developed, and mindfulness of breathing should be developed for the cutting off of discursive thought.

Mindfulness of breathing (Ānāpānasati)

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa
Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa
Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa

Ānāpānasatī yassa - paripuṇṇā subhāvitā;
Anupubbaṃ paricitā - yathā buddhena desitā;
Somaṃ lokaṃ pabhāseti - abbhā muttova candimā

--Tha 548 "Mahākappinattheragāthā"

"(One who has fulfilled, consolidated and methodically developed mindfulness of breathing as taught by the Buddha, illuminates the world,If one practices Anapanasathi meditation the way Buddha has taught, comprehensively and in a profound and manner, practices it sequentially and methodically, one shall brighten and

illuminate this world just as the full moon which emerged from the clouds.

Meditation Instructions:

Since purification of moral conduct is essential for the purification of mind, it is important that, to begin with, the meditator cleanses his moral conduct and becomes content and pleased about his unblemished **sīla**.

The meditator should refresh himself by bathing his body, then he should approach an appropriate seat facing East or North, in a calm and quiet place with proper ventilation. The atmosphere should be relaxing. He should be seatedsit crossed- legged with an attentive mind. Since this posture is recommended to both monks and lay meditators it is appropriate that they follow it.

After sitting down, he should pay homage to the Noble Triple Gem and entrust his life to the same. The meditator should fulfill the preliminary work (to be chanted) such as entrusting his life to the Noble Triple Gem, the virtuous friends (**kalyāṇa mittā**), recollecting the virtues of the Buddha, etc.

He should contemplate these four subjects of meditation: lovingkloving-kindness, the virtues of the Buddha, the repulsiveness of a corpse and recollection of death. He may then start **anāpānasati** meditation by establishing his focus on the incoming and outgoing breaths.

While keeping his head, neck and the torso erect, he should visualize himself in the sitting posture, mentally reciting “'seated, seated…” The eyes (while closed) should be focused on the end of nostrils.

As stated in “**So satova assasati satova passasati**” one should inhale and exhale mindfully. Focusing the mind at the point where the breath which touches the nostrils, to begin with, one should count incoming and outgoing breaths separately having the mind focused at the point where the breath touches the nostrils as “1-2-3-4-5 ", “1-2-3-4-5-6 ", “1-2-3-4-5-6-7”, “1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8”, “1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9", “1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10”.

One should keep on reciting these counts mentally, without

breaking the sequence.
As stated in "**dīghaṃ vā assasanto 'dīghaṃ assasāmī'ti pajānāti**, when inhaling and exhaling deep breaths, one should observe the breath from start to finish with an attentive mind, counting: "one, one, two, two, three, three."
As stated in "**rassaṃ vā assasanto 'rassaṃ assasāmī'ti pajānāti**" when the breathing is short, one should count: "one, two, three." If one forgots the numbers incorrect in the middle, one should start again from the beginning
To further develop concentration, one should proceed with the counting cycles in ascending and descending order. One should follow this sequence - from one to five, five to one; one to six, six to one, until reaching one to ten, ten to one.
As stated in "**sabbakāya paṭisaṃvedi assasāmī'ti sikkhati**" one should contemplate the beginning, middle and end phases of both the incoming and outgoing breaths with an attentive mind (abandoning the counting process).
Sabbakaya patisanvedi assasamithi sikkhathi" if starting of breath, presence, and its end are called start, middle and the end one should contemplate throughout these three states, with an attentive mind in both of incoming and outgoing breath.
As stated in "**passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī'ti sikkhati**, one may notice that the incoming and outgoing breath gradually becomes less prominent and more subtle.
When the mind becomes concentrated one would will feel a sense of joy. As mind and body becomes subtler one would experience comfort which is soothing.

If the breath becomes so subtler that it appears to vanish altogether, don't panic and just keep the mind focused at the tip of the nose where the touch of the breath was previously felt should keep the mind focused at the tip of the nose, where he previously felt By doing so one will start to feel the incoming and outgoing breaths again.
As concentration develops further, one will be able to experience the 'acquired sign' (**uggaha nimitta**) and the 'counterpart sign' (**paṭibhāga nimitta**) related to **ānāpānasati** The Aacquired signs may take various forms, such as lights, stars, gems, pearls, cotton

wool, white clouds, silver rays, that approach and recede in front of one's face.

When concentration strengthens even more, the nimitta will become still and stay at the tip of the nose. It is then called the counterpart sign. When the hindrances are abandoned and the factors of absorption become stronger it is called 'access concentration' (**upacāra samādhi**). By further developing **ānāpānasati**, one canh attain **jhāna**, which is called 'absorption Abortion concentration' (**appanā samādhi**).

A Blessing

This short book has been written to give the reader an introduction to the preparatory practices necessary to develop deeper levels of meditation. We hope the reader will use it to develop his good qualities, qualities that will bring peace and happiness to his life. May these practices be a support for your complete awakening.

“Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā ”
May all beings be happy!!!